

VZCZCXYZ0008
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #0613/01 0721011
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 131011Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0969
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 5149
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 1746
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 5644
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5957
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 5186
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 3687
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 5994
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2817
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1027
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 9736
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 7237
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 2199
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 6238
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 8276
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 1066
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 1649
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 000613

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Media reported that yesterday IDF Chief-of-Staff Gabi Ashkenazi left for an official visit to the U.S. HaQaretz said he is expected to warn American military officials about Iranian efforts to develop nuclear weapons. During his five-day visit, Ashkenazi is scheduled to meet National Security Advisor James Jones, Chairman of the U.S.

Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen, and Dennis Ross, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Special Advisor for the Gulf and Southwest Asia. Yediot's Washington and Rome correspondents reported on meetings that took place last week in Europe, in which Dennis Ross and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns met with European officials dealing with Iran. Yediot reported that, during these meetings, U.S. officials assessed that, should Iran proceed to the next stage of uranium enrichment, Israel would respond in a complex military operation, in which it might use land-based commando forces.

All media reported on the speech delivered yesterday by former president Moshe Katsav, which lasted over two and a half hours. The speech covered numerous targets: Attorney General Moshe Mazuz, the State Prosecutor's Office, the police, the women who filed the complaints against him, and the media. In particular, however, he assailed Mazuz's integrity (He said: QMy Noose Is Mazuz's LifelineQ) and presented himself as a victim of law enforcement agencies. The large-circulation media depicted the event in very harsh terms: Yediot bannered its senior columnist Nahum Barnea's op-ed piece: QKatsav's Circus,Q and Maariv its columnist's Rino Tsrur's commentary: QThe Shame.

Israel Radio reported that a rocket landed in southern Israel this morning.

HaQaretz quoted Palestinian sources in Cairo as saying yesterday that Israel has agreed to free all 450 of the prisoners demanded by Hamas in exchange for Gilad Shalit, and that the dispute now revolves around Israel's demand that some of these prisoners be deported rather than returned home. Senior Hamas leader Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahar was quoted as saying in an interview with the Arabic-language Kull Al-Arab that no progress has been made on the prisoner-exchange issue and that the information that Israel publishes on the matter is false.

Former U.S. diplomat Fred Hof, who is Qtapped to be a top adviser to Middle East special envoy George Mitchell,Q suggested yesterday in an interview with The Jerusalem Post that demanding Syria formally break with Iran, Hizbullah, and Hamas as a precondition to a peace treaty with Israel could be counterproductive. Hof sees Syria receiving sovereignty over Golan territory up to the Sea of Galilee and Israelis being able to visit the area without visas.

Israel Radio reported that Fatah demanded of Hamas at their Cairo talks that it recognize in Israel. Hamas reportedly demanded that the right to fight Israel be agreed upon. The Jerusalem Post quoted negotiators on both sides as saying that they are having difficulty reaching an agreement over the makeup and political program of a Palestinian unity government.

Leading commentators called Prof. Yaakov NeQeman, who is slated for the justice minister's post, a sophisticated version of incumbent minister Daniel Friedmann,

In a FRC story from Quantico, The Jerusalem Post features Hannah Feuerstein, granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, who found acceptance and equality with the U.S. Marines.

Former German MP Jamal Assi was quoted as saying in an interview with the Arabic-language Assennara that Iran is ready to support and establish an Islamic party that would run in the European Parliament's elections.

Citing the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, The Jerusalem Post reported that Steven Rosen, the former policy chief of AIPAC charged with receiving classified information, is suing the lobbying group for defamation, seeking \$21 million.

The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli rabbinic delegation as saying that the latest crisis with the Vatican is over. Its members spoke after a papal audience.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Jewish National Fund is looking to revive a plan to import water from Turkey.

HaQaretz reported that the recent GOI decision to introduce biometric identity cards is stirring a debate over privacy.

HaQaretz reported that, for minorities, military service is an entry ticket into Israeli society.

HaQaretz (English Ed.) reported that, while foreign diplomats find a variety of ways to join in local Purim celebrations, the U.S. Embassy did not plan special events.

The Jerusalem Post bannered the Bernard Madoff story and made it the topic of its editorial.

Mideast:

Summary:

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: QThis is a last-minute appeal from a worried citizen to Tzipi Livni: Give Bibi a call and tell him you are ready to join a unity government under him.

Dr. Ron Breiman, former chairman of the conservative group Professors for a Strong Israel, wrote in HaQaretz: QThe Qtwo-state visionQ has to be thrown into the garbage bin of history. It will never give rise to peace.

Conservative Op-Ed Page Editor Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: QIf the Construction MinistryQs plans are completed, the anti-Zionist vision will be implemented by ultra-Zionists. The binational state will become a fact.

Block Quotes:

II. "Last-Minute Appeal to Livni"

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (3/13): QThis is a last-minute appeal from a worried citizen to Tzipi Livni: Give Bibi a call and tell him you are ready to join a unity government under him.... The skeleton of the Bibi government, which is now taking on flesh and form, recalls a central character in a horror movie. A faction of 15 members, most of them unknowns, will shape the character of Israel's next government. The thought that the central figure here, Avigdor Lieberman, tried to dictate who Israel's next justice minister will be, while he himself faces a hefty indictment, is intolerable.... When Begin, who throughout his life talked about Greater Israel, came to power, he appointed Moshe Dayan foreign minister. When asked why he gave the coveted post to someone from Mapai [the precursor of the Labor Party], of all people, he replied: QI want someone for whom the world's greats will rise in respect when our foreign minister enters their officeQ.... However one looks at the situation, Tzipi Livni, Bibi's government in this format is not the answer to the grave problems the country faces at this time.

II. "No Room for Two States"

Dr. Ron Breiman, former chairman of the conservative group Professors for a Strong Israel, wrote in HaQaretz (3/13): QWe do not know what Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu will say to U.S. President Barack Obama during their first meeting, but let us hope that it will be something along the following lines.... QSince Oslo, Israel has been ruled by suicidal tendencies and has been brainwashed into believing that peace can be achieved by means of suicide: the lie of the establishment of a Palestinian state. The truth is that the Israeli and American interest obliges disengagement from the lies that have plunged Israel and its neighbors into a downward spiral ever since. The "two-state vision" has to be thrown into the garbage bin of history. It will never give rise to peace.

III. "The End in Sight"

Conservative Op-Ed Page Editor Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (3/13): QWe are at the last moment. The Zionist

vision is dying.... With the advent of the narrow right-wing government, which depends on the kindness of supporters of Greater Israel, plans to build 73,000 housing units beyond the Green Line might materialize.... [In another development,] 900 mostly American academics wrote an open letter to the President of the U.S. They in effect asked him to dismantle Israel as a Jewish state and replace with a single state. We are asleep. If the Construction Ministry's plans are completed, the anti-Zionist vision will be implemented by ultra-Zionists. The binational state will become a fact.... This is not all. The second-largest Spanish daily, El Mundo, recently published a totally anti-Semitic article, which does not distinguish between Jews and Israel. The item says that the Jews are to blame for all the trouble in history.... Will Israel have a majority to withstand the impending disaster? Will Israeli democracy stop the creation of the binational state, which won't actually be binational, but yet another entity that will amount to a bloodbath?.... If we don't stop this process, it will be the end of the Zionist vision.

CUNNINGHAM